

MARY BELL'S SERIES.



THE HISTORY OF
TOM THUMB

PETER G. THOMSON CIN'TI.O.

THE HISTORY OF TOM THUMB.

IN the days when the good old King Arthur was able
To feast knights each day at his famous Round Table,
There lived in a cottage—it matters not where,
Indeed I don't know, and I'm sure you don't care—
A thrifty young farmer; and he and his wife
Knew little of trouble, and nothing of strife.
It happened one day that the lady felt sad,
And she cried, "Oh, I wish that a baby I had!"
"Have your wish then!" a voice from her pocket replied.
Up went both her hands and her eyes opened wide,
And out of her pocket a fairy arose,
In what shape or form there is no one who knows,
But just as her handkerchief fell to the ground,
She heard in her pocket another strange sound—
"Mamma! dear mamma!—see—see—I have come,
Just the length and the thickness of dear papa's thumb!"
Mamma said, "How charming! now we are so blest;
But, child, you'll take cold, you have come quite undrest.
From those pea-pods the stuff for a coat you can choose;
Two pips of this apple will make you nice shoes;
And if a good boy you will promise to be,
Knickerbockers I'll scrape from that carrot, you see."
Just then to the cottage the fairy queen came,
And said to the lady, "Your boy I will name."
She waived her white hand and said, "Boy, hither come,
Henceforth and for ever your name is TOM THUMB."
"Oh, what a nice name!" his fond mother said;
"I am glad he is named—he can now go to bed.
With a bean-pod a very snug crib we can make,
And for curtains the skins of two cherries I'll take."



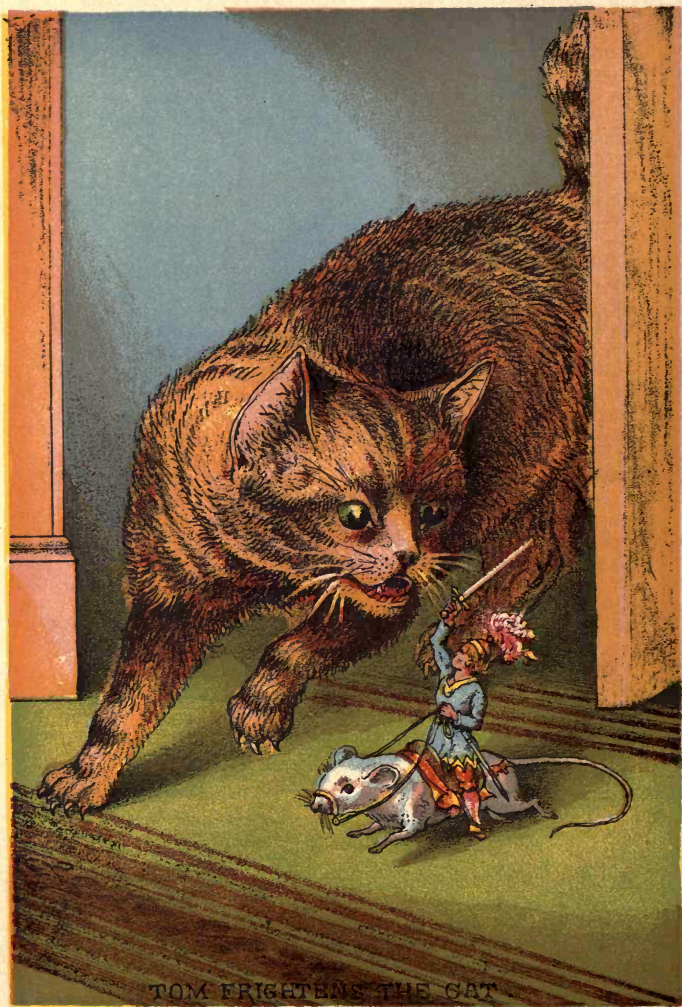
THE COW TAKES TOM IN.

THE HISTORY OF TOM THUMB.

So Tom Thumb went to bed without crying, each night,
And got up by a ladder as soon as 't was light.
Tom went with his mother to see a dun cow :
The leaf of a thistle he took for a bough ;
He sat down upon it, but, shocking to tell,
The cow seized the thistle, and Tom Thumb as well.
To the cow's upper jaw Tom manfully elung ;
He kicked her front teeth, and he tickled her tongue.
The cow could not ask him what he was about,
So she opened her mouth and she let him jump out.
To his mother he ran, told his tale, and she soon
Gave him a bath in an old silver spoon.
Two days after that, Tom was seized by a crow,
Which bore him away to grim Giant Grumbow.
The giant exclaimed, "What a queer little fly!
I'll put it in water, and there let it die."
Then into the river poor Tom Thumb was thrown,
And made a small splash like a round pebble stone.
He was seized by a salmon which swallowed him whole :
But just then a fisherman, named Simon Cole,
Caught the salmon, and sent it without much delay
To the king, who for salmon would handsomely pay.
The salmon was cut—but it made the cook stare
For as no doubt you guess our small hero was there.
When King Arthur saw Tom, he was filled with delight,
And he and the Queen kept awake all the night ;
But before they did that, the King asked Tom his name,
And of course Tom had read of King Arthur's great fame ;
So Tom told him his name, and his history also,
And said, "I should like to my mother to go."
"Then go," said the King, "but, pray, come again soon."
Tom said, "I'll be with you to-morrow at noon"
Tom did as he promised, but shocking to tell,
Into hot porridge made for the King, Tommy fell.
A maid took him out. "Poor fellow," said she,
"I think in a mouse-trap much safer you'll be."
The maid quite forgot about Tom in the trap,
Till the King, having heard of his awkward mishap,
Sent two or three pages of honor to know
Why Tom Thumb was kept in the kitchen below.
The servants all then were, of course, much afraid,
And went down on their knees, when Jenima the maid
Recollected the trap, and to Tom Thumb she went,
To tell him the message King Arthur had sent,

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And begged for her pardon he'd do what he could.
Tom Thumb very kindly replied that he would.
So as soon as before great King Arthur he came,
He said, "Pardon the servants, they are not to blame.
And as for Jemima, no maid have I seen
So thoughtful, and civil, and steady, and clean :
Yea, all that she does is so worthy of praise,
That I hope great King Arthur her wages will raise."
The King was so pleased that he could not say No.
But turned to Earl-Marshal and said, "My lord, go
Tell Jemima the maid she has nothing to fear,
Her wages are raised thirteen shillings a year."
Then the Earl-Marshal bowed himself down to the ground
And said, "My lord King, there is not to be found
Such a generous monarch throughout all the land,
Most gladly I'll do what you're pleased to command."
Tom Thumb so delighted the King and the Queen,
That wherever they went he was sure to be seen.
In the King's waistcoat-pocket he sometimes would loll,
Sometimes he would lounge in the Queen's parasol ;
A ladder he had to get into her lap,
And he sometimes would hide in the bows of her cap.
Once a captain came in, who had on a new coat,
Tom Thumb just to tease him jumped right down his throat.
The captain, alarmed, sent for thirty strong men.
By the time they arrived, Tom had jumped back again.
The captain was vexed, but what could he do ?
The King and Queen laughed, he was forced to laugh too.
But he said to Earl-Marshal, "The next time I come,
I'll keep far enough from that little Tom Thumb."
King Arthur, for fun, made Tom Thumb a knight ;
He was armed with a sword, and was taught how to fight.
Instead of a steed, he rode a white mouse
Which knew all the corners and holes in the house.
One day a great cat came rushing at Tom,
But he told her to go to the place she came from.
She did not move on—Tom thought she would scratch,
Or that perhaps she might fancy his white mouse to catch ;
So he drew his good sword, so sharp and so bright—
Puss ran with dismay and half fainted from fright.
As the King, and the Queen, and the court slept one day,
The fairy Queen Mab came and fetched Tom away.
In the land of the fairies he dwells for some years,
And then once again in Old England appears.



TOM FRIGHTENS THE CAT



TOM WITH THE KING AND QUEEN.

THE HISTORY OF TOM THUMB.

But the times are now changed, and King Arthur is dead,
And Thunstone, another king, reins in his stead.
Tom went to the palace without much ado,
He was shown to King Thunstone, who said, "Who are you?"
Tom bowed to the King, and the Queen his fair bride,
And thus in his musical voice he replied,—

"My name is Tom Thumb,
From the fairies I come.
When King Arthur shone,
This court was my own;
In me he delighted,
By him I was knighted—
Did you never hear of
Sir Thomas Thumb?"

The King said, "Sir Thomas, I hope you'll agree
To live here, to play with the Queen and with me."
So Tom went to the palace and lived at his ease,
And tried how the King and the Queen he could please.
A carriage he had, out of orange-peel made;
Six white mice which drew it, his orders obeyed,
And day after day, Tom Thumb might be seen
With his carriage and mice, near the King and the Queen.
But the Queen soon got jealous, and said, "I declare
Tom Thumb has a carriage as well as a chair:
When I asked for a carriage, I met with reproach,
And was told I must use the old family coach.
I do n't know, I'm sure, to what things may come,
If the King spends so much on that little Tom Thumb."
So she went to the King, and her face was quite red.
"Dear! what is the matter?" the King to her said.
"Oh, I do n't like to tell, but I must tell," said she,
"That Tom Thumb behaves, oh, so rudely to me."
The King said, "I thought he was always polite."
Said the Queen, "He is civil when you are in sight;
But oh, I so hate him, I wish he were dead."
"To oblige you," the King said, "we'll cut off his head."
So he sent out his soldiers to find Sir Tom Thumb;
The trumpets they blew, and they beat the big drum,
And if any boys out in the street asked them why,
They answered, "Because a brave knight is to die."
Tom heard it and said, "I do n't know as to that,
Ere they cut off my head, I will put on my hat."
Tom ran to his mother, and told her his life
Was in danger because of the King's jealous wife

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So his mother advised him to lie still in bed,
In order to save both his clothes and his head.
So Tom went to bed, and he slept for ten days,
And to sleep longer still, he tried all sorts of ways.
At last he was tired of keeping awake,
So he said, "I'll get up, and a walk I will take."
He walked for two days, and for three or four nights,
Saw all sorts of people and all sorts of sights.
Then he thought he must rest, or his strength would soon fail,
And he went to lie down in the shell of a snail.
Tom soon fell asleep, but somebody spoke,
And Tom, in alarm for his safety, awoke.
He listened—'t was only some children at play.
Said he, "I had better keep out of their way ;
They are going to school, and when they are there,
To find better lodging will be my first care."
Just then came a little girl seven years old,
Her frock was of silk trimmed with spangles of gold ;
She took up the shell in which Tom Thumb was hid,
And little she thought of the mischief she did,
For she threw up the shell on a very high bank,
And amid the long grass, with Tom in it, it sank.
The bank to Tom Thumb such a mountain appeared,
That he never would get to the bottom, he feared.
Just then as he spoke, he saw near the bank
A friend of the Queen's—a Duke of high rank.
"I am caught now at last," said poor Tom in a fright,
"And I much want to sleep with my head on, to-night.
But how to escape, I am sure I can't tell—
Ah! there's a fine butterfly close to the shell!
I'll jump on its back, and be off in a trice—
A ride on a butterfly's back must be nice."
The Duke saw Sir Thomas just taking his flight,
So he called to him kindly, "Sir Thomas, good-night."
"Oh, Duke," said our hero, "I guess what you mean—
Good-night, sir, and give my respects to the Queen."
Then up flew the butterfly—Tom with him went,
But the butterfly could not make out what it meant,
That without asking leave any mortal should dare
To jump on his back, and take a ride there.
So he flew over houses, and churches, and trees,
And Tom soon began to feel not quite at ease.
The butterfly tried to make Tom Thumb fall down ;
In a puddle he threw him, that there he might drown.



TOM AND THE BUTTERFLY.

THE HISTORY OF TOM THUMB.

Tom Thumb thought that drowning would not do him good,
So he called out for help quite as loud as he could.
And whilst he was shouting, two soldiers came by ;
"Sir Thomas," said they, "the King says you must die ,
But you know, it is said, whilst there's life there is hope,
And 't is better to wait for the ax or the rope,
Than to drown in a puddle, so now, out you come,
And we shall get something for finding Tom Thumb."
When they came to the palace, the king had gone out ;
The Queen heard a noise, and asked what 't was about.
They told her that little Tom Thumb had been found—
"Before he was lost," said the Queen, "I'll be bound ;
The King likes that dwarf, and will not have him killed,
But I'll let him know that I too am self-willed.
Put Tom in a mouse-trap, and there let him stay,
Give him nothing to eat or to drink all the day."
So there, in the trap, poor Tom Thumb was kept,
And, more from vexation than hunger, he wept.
The Queen's kitten thought that a mouse or a rat
In the trap had been caught, so she gave it a pat.
She was rather surprised when our hero she saw,
And she opened the trap by a dab of her paw.
Once more Tom was free ; but a spider came by,
And taking the knight for a blue-bottle fly,
Sprang forward to seize him ; when our brave little knight
Stood his ground, drew his sword, and made ready to fight.
But the spider drew near, and his poisonous breath
So affected poor Tom that it soon caused his death.
"He fell on the ground where he lately had stood,
And the spider sucked up the last drop of his blood."
The King and the court into deep mourning went ;
Two days and three nights in lamenting they spent.
Then under a rose-bush they buried Tom Thumb—
His monument cost them a very large sum ;
For on it his name, death, and doings were told—
It had this inscription in letters of gold :—

"Here lies Tom Thumb, King Arthur's knight,
Who died by a spider's cruel bite.
He was well known in Arthur's court,
Where he afforded gallant sport ;
He rode at tilt and tournament,
And on a mouse a-hunting went.
Alive, he filled the court with mirth ;
His death to sorrow soon gave birth,
Wipe, wipe your eyes and shake your head,
And cry, 'Alas! Tom Thumb is dead.'"

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